

REMARKS

Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 2-5, 7, 8, and 10-13 are pending in the present application. Claims 10, 11, and 12 are the independent claims.

Claims 10-12 have been amended. No new matter is believed to have been added.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants note that the Office Action Summary indicates that claims 2-8 and 10-13 are pending in this application, and claims 2-8 and 10-13 stand rejected. However, Applicants cancelled claim 6 in the Amendment filed December 9, 2005. Thus, claims 2-5, 7, 8, and 10-13 are pending in the present application, and claims 2-5, 7, 8, and 10-13 stand rejected.

Additionally, Applicants note that MPEP §707.07(f) requires that an Office Action answer all material traversed. Specifically, MPEP 707.07(f) states "where the applicant traverses any rejection, the examiner should, if he or she repeats the rejection, take note of the applicant's argument and answer the substance of it." At page 2, numbered item 2, the Office Action states "Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 2-8, 10-13 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection." The Examiner Note to form paragraph 7.38 states "The examiner **must**, however, address any arguments presented by the applicant which are still relevant to any references being applied." Applicants note that Gudjonsson et al. was applied in the Office Action mailed August 9, 2005, and Applicants presented arguments relevant to Gudjonsson et al. in the Amendment filed December 9, 2005. However, in the Office Action mailed December 22, 2005, Gudjonsson et al. was again applied to the claims without addressing the arguments of the December 9, 2005 Amendment. Applicants respectfully request that the next Office Action address any arguments presented by Applicants which are relevant to any references still being applied, as set forth in the Examiner Note to form paragraph 7.38.

Claims 2-5, 7, 8, and 10-13 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-20 of U.S. Patent No. 6,735,615. As the present application and U.S. Patent No. 6,735,615 are commonly owned, a Terminal Disclaimer is submitted herewith to overcome this non-statutory double patenting rejection.

Claims 2-5, 7, 8, and 10-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over previously cited U.S. Patent No. 6,564,261 to Gudjonsson et al. in view of newly cited U.S. Patent No. 5,802,296 to Morse et al. All rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 10 recites, *inter alia*, "storing a plurality of user status selection tables including user status options from which a user selects his/her own status for each virtual space in which the user participates", "reading out the user status selection table of each virtual space in which a user terminal participates when the user terminal has participated in a plurality of virtual spaces", "displaying on the user terminal the list of the selectable user statuses for each virtual space based on the read-out user status selection table", and "setting a user status which was selected from the list of selectable user statuses for each virtual space in which the user has participated". Independent claims 11 and 12 correspond generally to independent claim 10 and recite similar features.

Without conceding the propriety of the asserted combination, it is respectfully submitted that the asserted citation does not teach or suggest at least the aforementioned features of amended independent claims 10, 11, and 12.

The Office Action contends that Gudjonsson et al. at col. 26, lines 30-37 teaches "setting a user status which was selected from the list of selectable user statuses for each virtual space in which the user has participated." The cited portion of Gudjonsson et al. recites, in part, "As discussed above, services that facilitate things like knowing the online status of other users, setting your (if you are a user 7) online status, and storing your contacts in a hierarchical list are also available." While Gudjonsson et al. discusses setting a user status, it is silent as to "setting a user status which was selected from the list of selectable user statuses for each virtual space in which the user has participated."

The primary citation to Gudjonsson et al. is directed to a distributed system to intelligently establish sessions between anonymous users over various networks. At pages 3-4, the Office Action contends that Gudjonsson et al. teaches all of the features of amended independent claim 10, except for "including user status options from which a user selects his/her own status for each virtual space". Newly cited Morse et al., which is directed to supervisory powers that provide additional control over images on computers system displays to users interacting via computer systems, is relied upon to teach this feature.

At page 4, the Office Action contends that Gudjonsson et al. teaches "storing a plurality of user status selection tables" and cites Gudjonsson et al. at col. 3, lines 37-45, col. 12, lines 42-54, and col. 12, line 55-col. 13, line 4 in support of this contention. According to independent claims 10, 11, and 12, each user status selection table stores statuses from which a user can select a status. Gudjonsson et al. at col. 3, lines 37-45, merely states "The application provides users with a buddy list (i.e., contact list). A user can add other users to this list and organize them into groups. Using the application, the user can be aware of the online status of users in his/her buddy list (i.e., contact list), and get notification when these users' status(es) change. Moreover, a user can set his/her own online status, make himself/herself invisible to annoying users, and send users in his/her buddy list any kind of message with a simple double click." Applicants respectfully submit that the buddy lists of Gudjonsson et al. are not analogous to the user status selection tables of the independent claims.

Gudjonsson et al. at col. 12, lines 42-54, merely discusses that user specific data, service specific data, and administrative data are all stored in a scalable database, thus making it possible to use any installed client that is compatible with the system/network without preliminary customization. Gudjonsson et al. at col. 12, line 55 to col. 13, line 4 merely discusses that a user can view information about users in his or her contact list, or send invitations to the selected contact. Applicants respectfully submit that Gudjonsson et al. is silent as to "storing a plurality of user selection tables".

The Office Action contends that Gudjonsson et al. teaches "reading out the user status selection table of each virtual space in which a user terminal participates when the user terminal has participated in a plurality of virtual spaces" and cites Gudjonsson et al. at col. 3, lines 37-45, col. 11, line 52, and col. 12, lines 55-67 in support of this contention. Applicants respectfully disagree. Gudjonsson et al. at col. 3, lines 37-45, discussed above, fails to disclose a user status selection table. Col. 11, line 52 of Gudjonsson et al. merely discusses that "This status reflects whether a given user is currently logged in the system or not". There is no discussion of user status selection tables.

Finally, col. 12, lines 55-67 of Gudjonsson et al. merely discuss that additional functionality, such as contact information and the ability to send invitations to the contact becomes available to a user when a person is selected from the user's contact list. While a user may a buddy's status using this additional functionality, Gudjonsson et al. does not teach or suggest reading out the user status selection table of each virtual space in which a user terminal

participates when the user terminal has participated in a plurality of virtual spaces, as recited in the independent claims. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Gudjonsson et al. is silent as to "reading out the user status selection table of each virtual space in which a user terminal participates when the user terminal has participated in a plurality of virtual spaces", as recited in amended independent claim 10.

The Office Action contends that Gudjonsson et al. teaches "displaying on the user terminal the list of selectable user statuses for each virtual space based on the read-out user status selection table", and cites Gudjonsson et al. at col. 12, lines 5-15 in support of this contention. However, as discussed above, Gudjonsson et al. fails to teach or suggest a user status selection table, or reading out a user status selection table. Further, the cited portion of Gudjonsson et al. merely discusses that SSH is the security protocol preferably used by the client. Specifically, Gudjonsson et al. teaches that all information specific to a logged in user is cached and encrypted on the client machine. Gudjonsson et al., however, is silent as to "displaying on the user terminal the list of selectable user statuses for each virtual space based on the read-out user status selection table". Gudjonsson et al. merely displays a buddy list.

Newly cited Morse et al. is relied upon to teach "including user status options from which a user selects his/her own status for each virtual space in which the user participates", and col. 4, lines 15-28 are relied upon in support of this contention. Morse et al. at lines 15-21 states "Each oracle or acolyte avatar 180.i may notify server 140 that this avatar is on or off duty. This is done by the avatar's user 120.i issuing an appropriate command to client 130.i (using the 'Status' menu described in the aforementioned patent application 'Virtual Objects for Building a Sense of Community in a Virtual World'). Server 140 maintains a list of all oracles and acolytes on duty."

Applicants respectfully submit that Morse et al. fails to discuss user status options from which a user selects his/her own status for each virtual space. Rather, Morse et al. teaches that each oracle or acolyte is either off duty, in which case it is not registered with the server, or on duty. When an oracle or acolyte is on duty, it is listed on an "on-duty list." Applicants respectfully submit that Morse et al. fails to teach or suggest "user status options from which a user selects his/her own status for each virtual space in which the user participates." According to Morse et al., if a user is on duty, the user's oracle or acolyte merely appears on an "on-duty list", without any status indicator.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the asserted combination does not teach or suggest at least the aforementioned features of independent claims 10, 11, and 12.

Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of independent claims 10, 11, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. Further, the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons as their respective base claims and further due to the additional features that they recite. Separate and individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants believe that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action. However, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to such matters.

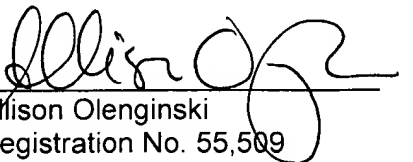
There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any underpayments or overpayments of fees associated with the filing of this Amendment, please charge and/or credit the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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